



Shared Prosperity Agenda for 2020

As our economy changes, working families face more uncertainty, fewer protections on the job, and rising costs to meet basic needs. The State Legislature must take proactive steps to help workers secure a better life. By promoting the creation of good jobs, securing reliable benefits, improving how government delivers services, and investing in healthy communities, our Legislature can help ensure that economic prosperity is truly shared.



WORKER PROTECTION ACT

We have many great workplace protections—wage and hour, equal pay, health and safety, and anti-discrimination laws. But enforcement agencies often have years-long backlogs and the federal government limits what tools workers have to achieve justice. **HB 1965**, the Worker Protection Act, creates a pathway for workers to blow the whistle when current laws are violated, while generating resources for stronger state enforcement.

HEALTH SYSTEM AND FACILITY TRANSPARENCY

As our state continues to promote access to affordable quality health care, we lack the information we need to do so. Actions of health systems are complex and too often hidden. **HB 2036** creates more transparency to provide oversight and accountability for investments in health care.



BID LISTING

Some public works contractors alter their lists of subcontractors after winning bids so they can pay lower wages and boost profits at the expense of taxpayers — and project quality. **HB 1571/SB 5457** would end “post-bid shopping” by having subcontractors listed in all bids.

CANNABIS WORKER PROTECTION

As the cannabis industry grows in our state, lawmakers should take steps to ensure that this industry promotes and supports workers and our communities. **HB 2361/SB 6393** would establish licensing guidelines that support cannabis businesses that uphold strong standards — like a living wage, health care, workplace safety, community engagement, social equity and a right to organize. Its passage would be good for workers, families, communities and our state’s economy.

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PRIVACY

Our state has robust public disclosure laws, and that’s a good thing. But it exposes the personal and financial information of public workers to scam artists. **HB 1888** takes common sense steps to safeguard personal data—like birthdays and data that reveal addresses—to protect public workers’ safety and guard against identity theft and fraud.

SEE THE REVERSE for more priority issues on the WSLC’s 2020 Shared Prosperity Agenda.

HEALTHY FAMILIES, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- ❑ **AFFORDABLE HOUSING** — Housing affordability is a statewide crisis for workers in urban and rural communities, and for first time buyers and renters alike. The WSLC will support strategies to increase housing stock, to adopt smart land-use standards to promote housing options, and to support tenants burdened by extreme rental costs.
- ❑ **BUY CLEAN, BUY FAIR** — Through construction contracts, Washington state funds billions of dollars of infrastructure per year to improve our roads and bridges, and to build public facilities. However, much of the materials used in these projects are produced in places without quality environmental standards, adding toward our climate crisis. The WSLC will support efforts to promote the purchase of building materials manufactured here in Washington under some of the best environmental standards in the world.
- ❑ **SECURE SCHEDULING** — Many retail and food service workers struggle with unpredictable schedules that make it difficult to manage family needs, attend school, or balance a second job. And not knowing how many hours to expect leaves many scrambling to pay bills and rent. SB 5717/ HB 1491 ensures that people who work for large food and retail businesses have protections: two-week notice of schedules, adequate rests between shifts, and flexibility to swap shifts.
- ❑ **CHILD CARE** — Lack of access to quality, affordable childcare limits working families' job opportunities and work hours. As the state works to improve access, it must also strengthen the existing workforce by ensuring providers are fairly compensated, have benefits, and the right to join and participate in a union.
- ❑ **FIRE LIFE SAFETY** — Modern fire code for HVAC systems are designed to save lives, but often their required inspections is unenforced. The state should adopt strategies to ensure compliance of this important modern building standards.
- ❑ **TRAIN CREWS** (HB 1841/SB 5877) — Railroad companies have been implementing policies to limit train staffing to single person crews, and have even been exploring automated train operation without immediate human oversight. HB 1841 establishes minimum train crew sizes to protect communities put at risk by these staffing cuts.

PROTECTING WORKERS' RIGHTS

- ❑ **ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES AND BAILIFFS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING** (HB 2017 and 1333/SB 6367) — ALJs at the Office of Administrative Hearings and bailiffs for King County courts are denied the right to join together and collectively bargain, despite their counterparts at DOL, DOC, and the BIIA having those rights. The state should resolve this inequity by allowing these workers to come together to form a union.

- ❑ **OVERTIME PROTECTIONS** — This year, the Department of Labor and Industries updated our overtime rules for the first time in 40 years and restored protections for thousands of salaried workers. Restoring overtime helps working families by honoring and respecting people's time — that's good for workers and our economy. The WSLC will oppose any attempt to erode, roll back, or limit L&I's ability to maintain overtime protections.
- ❑ **PLUMBING CODE MODERNIZATION** (SB 6170) — The state should modernize the plumbing code to improve public health and safety, and ensure that workers are well-trained for the jobs they are doing.
- ❑ **UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FOR CAREGIVERS** — Job search requirements for unemployed workers who care for loved ones often require those workers to take jobs that do not allow them to provide care. These standards should be updated so workers are not forced to choose between an uncommon shift and caring for their family.
- ❑ **WAGE LIENS** (HB 1514/SB 6053) — When workers' wages have been stolen, some employers dissolve their businesses and form new LLCs to avoid paying up. HB 1514 will implement wage liens, providing all workers with an avenue to secure their owed wages, just like construction workers and farm workers can through mechanics and crop liens.

JUSTICE FOR INJURED WORKERS

- ❑ **INDEPENDENT MEDICAL EXAM REFORM** — Too often employers and the Department of Labor and Industries require unnecessary and invasive Independent Medical Exams for injured workers trying to heal and return to work. New workers' compensation policies should limit how often IMEs can be requested when other sufficient medical information is available.
- ❑ **THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATOR REFORM** (HB 2409) — TPAs are supposed to provide case management expertise for self-insured employers and Retrospective Rating program participants. Unfortunately, they are often used to suppress workers' compensation claims and undermine injured workers' ability to get the wage replacement and medical benefits they are due.

MORE EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT

- ❑ **BALANCE OUR TAX CODE** — The legislature must identify new, progressive sources of revenue to pay for the services our citizens need.
- ❑ **TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING** (HB 1521/SB 5655) — This requires state agencies and local governments to evaluate the cost of outsourcing work to private contractors and to conduct follow-ups to ensure contractors meet their obligations. It also calls for accountability if companies fail to perform their duties.



In addition to this Shared Prosperity Agenda, the WSLC will support other legislation championed by its affiliated unions and a range of issues to address economic opportunity and justice.

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